2:Wolf E-5 (1958-1961) 1964 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Hsiachichou

CHAPTER 2

THE SETTING

101 The village of Hsiachichou is a small Hokkien community located near the market town of Hsulin on the southwestern edge of the Taipei 101 basin. Seventy years ago when the Keelung and Tamsui Rivers were the 133 only convenient avenues of transportation within the basin, Hsiachichou 178 was commonly described as being situated on the west bank of the Tamsui 487 River two hours upstream from the city of Taipei. The village's location on the river was then one of its most important characteristics, a fact still reflected in the name Hsiachichou, "The Place Down on the 178 River." After 1923, however, the river began to lose its central place 487 in the life of the village, this being the year in which the Formosan 496 Development Company completed a rail line through the southern half [829] of the Taipei basin. At first many of the villagers refused to make use of the railroad, apparently afraid of becoming contaminated by coal dug in inauspicious locations, but the advantages of convenient transportation overcame their qualms. Where it had formerly taken hours of hard poling to make a round trip to Taipei, the railroad made it possible to travel to the city and back in little more than an hour and in relative comfort. The village of Hsiachichou is today thought of as being "fifteen minutes from the Hsulin Station" or "three stops down 823 track from Taipei." So completely has the river lost its central place 975 in the life of the village that it is only in the seventh lunar month

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING

Location and Physiography

131 The island of Taiwan (or Formosa) lies on an arc which is convex to the Asiatic mainland and is bisected by the Tropic of Cancer. At its closest point, Taiwan is 90 miles from the province of Fukien on the Chinese mainland and nearly equidistant between Shanghai and Hong Kong, each 400 miles distant (Cressey, 1964:174). Six hundred miles up the arc to the northeast through Okinawa is the Japanese island of Kyushu. Down the arc in the other direction is Luzon in the Philippines a distance of only 200 miles (Cressey, 1955:234). Taiwan is shaped roughly like a tobacco leaf, about 245 miles long and 90 miles wide at its widest point. Its coastline of 700 miles is exceptionally smooth and unindented (Tregear, 1965:304). With a total area of 13,800 square miles, it is about the size of Holland or Massachusetts (See Figure 1).

133 The island, for the most part, is very mountainous. There are thirty peaks exceeding 10,000 feet in elevation

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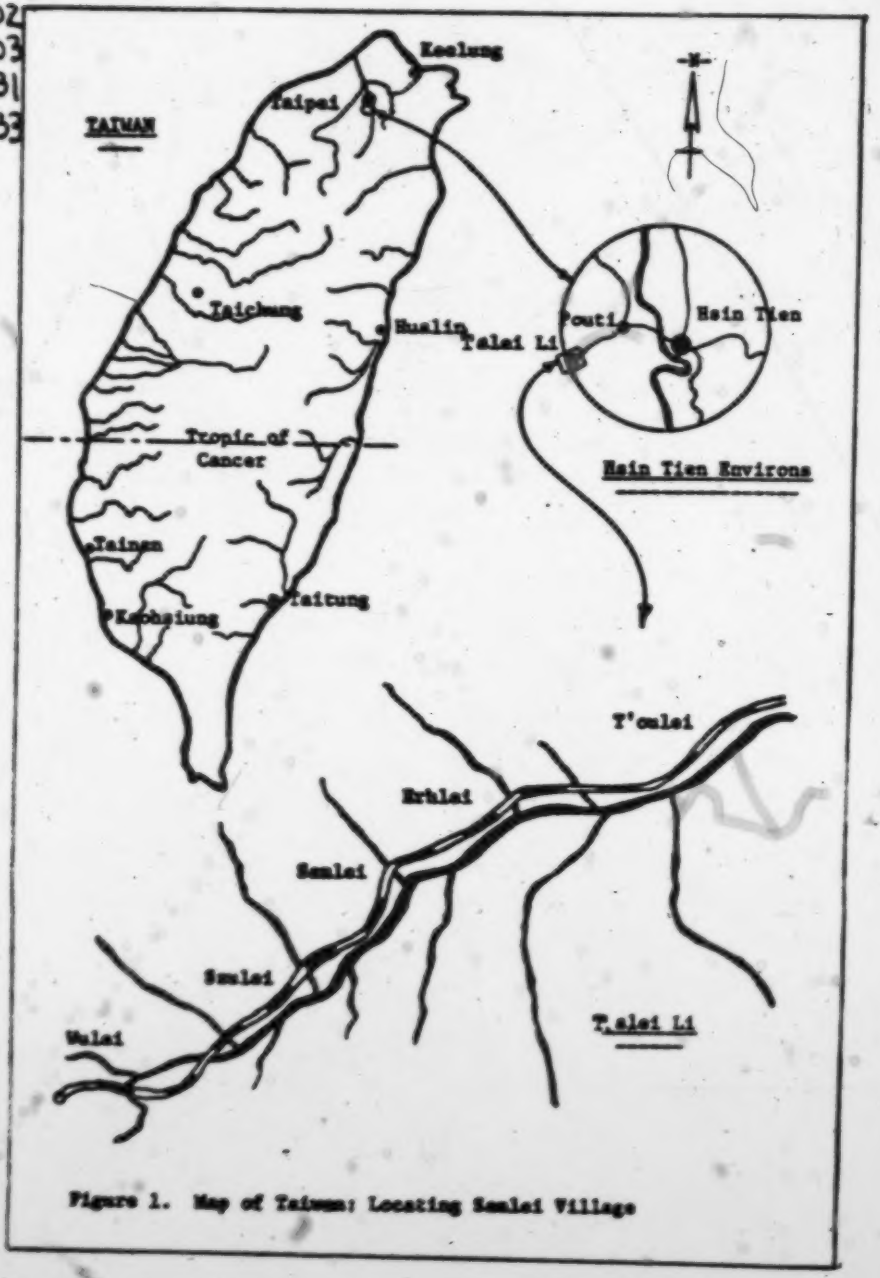

Figure 1. Map of Taiwan: Locating Sanlei Village

and land which is relatively flat totals only about fifteen per cent of the island (Cressey, 1964:177). The soils are similar to those of south China, mature, leached, acid, and in need of constant applications of lime and fertiliser (Tregear, 1965:306). Because of the terrain, scarcely more than one third of the land area is arable. The mountains are forested with some minerals, chiefly coal, found in the northern end of the island (Hsieh, 1964:109).

The village of Sanlei lies in the northern third of Taiwan, about four miles south of Taipei, Taiwan's capital and largest city with a 1965 population exceeding one and a quarter million people. To travel to the village, one first takes a highway bus to Hsin Tien, a town of over 10,000 people, 2-1/2 miles south of Taipei (See Figure 1). The township office with hegemony over Sanlei is located in Hsin Tien and the town has traditionally served as the major market and political center for the nearby villages. Because of the mountainous terrain, the extent of the area is irregular but probably does not exceed a radius of two miles at a maximum. In the direction of Taipei, its influence extends less than half the distance between town and city. Hsin Tien is also a famous tourist mecca, located next to Green Lake where boats may be rented. Prior to the construction of a modern four-lane highway in 1959, there was also a train from Taipei to Hsin Tien.

133 The Hsin Tien river runs through Hsin Tien on its way past Taipei to its mouth at the northern end of the island.

491 From Hsin Tien to Sanlei, one must travel on a
494 small rickety local bus a distance of another 2-1/2 miles on a road which meanders, generally in a southwest direction. About half way to the village the blacktop two-lane road narrows to one lane. When two vehicles meet, there is usually an argument about which one will back up to one of the various wider places in the road to let the
133 other pass. There is a small creek which parallels the road for most of the distance to Hsin Tien. About half-way to the village, two lines of foothills can be seen in the distance slowly converging on the road until they meet
491 rather abruptly at Wulei, two villages beyond Sanlei. In
494 Wulei, the road ends with a "turn around" where the bus
133 starts its trip back to Hsin Tien. In Sanlei, the foothills are only about 200 yards apart but even then, the narrow valley is terraced. At its lowest point, next to the river, the village elevation is about forty feet with the foothills rapidly rising to peaks with an elevation of over 800 feet.

361 Settlements in the area are primarily nucleated, a compact collection of houses surrounded by their fields with only a few scattered individual households. The nucleated settlements range in size from 8 or 10 houses to large villages with over 200. The larger villages are all

423 owners participated because of a fear the improved land
[651] would be given a higher grade resulting in increased taxes. Although reassessment has still not occurred, non-participants keep saying it soon will.

Irrigation

132 Rainfall in northern Taiwan is reasonably adequate
133 every month of the year. There are small mountains running parallel to the village on each side with a small
312 stream down the middle. The mountains produce a considerable water run-off which is channeled to the paddy fields where needed. Only about once every seven or eight years is there a serious shortage of water but there are slight shortages yearly in June and July. There are no water irrigation associations because there is so much surplus water and so many places that it can be tapped, that the small short channels are maintained informally by farmers in the few fields using each source. Only once in fifteen months did we observe a conflict over water levels in spite of these extremely informal arrangements. However, children get in trouble when they play in the fields and break down the barriers and let water fall below requisite levels.

Rice

243 Paddy fields are considered to be the most valuable
311 kind of agricultural land. From the earliest inception of